



## The Danish Collection of the History of Pharmacy: A Working Museum

by Poul R. Kruse\*

The Danish Collection of the History of Pharmacy is housed at Pharmakon in Hilleroed, the Danish Pharmaceutical Association's conference and training centre. The collection is owned by the Danish Foundation of the History of Pharmacy, established in 2002.

### The Danish Foundation of the History of Pharmacy

Until 2002, there were three organizations working to preserve the history of pharmacy in Denmark: the Danish Society for the History of Pharmacy, founded in 1953, the Danish Foundation for the Preservation of Old Pharmacy Equipment & Furniture, established in 1972, and the Collection of Old Pharmacy Equipment, founded in 1995, owned by the Danish Pharmaceutical Association and housed at Pharmakon.

In the spirit of the new millennium, it was felt that uniting the various stakeholders would best preserve the history of pharmacy in Denmark for future generations.

On 1 January 2002, the Danish Foundation for the Preservation of Old Pharmacy Equipment & Furniture was replaced by a new foundation, the Danish Foundation of the History of Pharmacy. At the same time, the Collection of Old Pharmacy Equipment was transferred to the new foundation and renamed the Danish Collection of the History of Pharmacy, and the Danish Society for the History of Pharmacy was also brought under the wings of the new foundation.

The Danish Foundation of the History of Pharmacy acts as an umbrella organization for activities relating to the history of pharmacy in Denmark. The object of the foundation is to carry out museum work to illustrate the history of pharmacy in Denmark, to promote research into the history of pharmacy in Denmark and to spread knowledge of the field in collaboration with the Danish Society for the History of Pharmacy.

The foundation is headed by a 10-member board representing the organizations, institutions, and authorities involved with pharmaceuticals in Denmark.

The foundation carries out the work of the museum and other activities connected with the Danish Collection of the History of Pharmacy at Pharmakon in Hilleroed.

### The Danish Collection of the History of Pharmacy

In Denmark, the pharmacy service developed successively from the middle of the 16th century. In the following centuries, the pharmacies were under an obligation to provide, manufacture, store, and dispense medicines, an obligation that put them at the hub of the entire pharmaceutical process.

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\* The Danish Foundation of the History of Pharmacy, Pharmakon a/s, 42 Milnersvej, DK-3400 Hilleroed.

In about 1900, the pharmacies began to experience competition from the growing pharmaceutical industry, and during the 20th century, pharmaceutical companies gradually assumed the task of providing and manufacturing medicines. Medicine manufacturing in Danish pharmacies ceased definitively in 1990.

Against this background, the Danish Collection of the History of Pharmacy illustrates the operation of the pharmacies and the pharmaceutical industry, as well as the history of medicines in Denmark over the past 100 years.

The collection is a working museum. The tools and devices in the collection that pharmacies used for the age-old craft of manufacturing medicines, as well as the tablet machines and other apparatus used for tablet production in pharmacies and pharmaceutical companies have been restored to working condition by the collection's technical engineer or by a machine workshop. This restoration enables us to show visitors how medicines were manufactured in the past, including the manufacture of pills, dispensing powders, suppositories and ointments, and the manufacture of tablets in particular. A selection of pharmaceutical antiquities, books and documents has also been restored. The restored effects make up the ornamental objects of the collection.

The collection is divided into three sections: a pharmacy section, a tablet manufacture section, and a medicine exhibition.

The pharmacy section starts with an exhibition of ornamental objects from Danish pharmacies, including signs, symbols, jars, bottles, mortars, scales, copper apparatus, and other antique pharmacy items. The section continues with exhibitions of tools, devices, and machines used for manufacturing medicines in the pharmacies, as well as displays of glasses, bottles, boxes, labels, stamps and prescription envelopes used when dispensing medicines. The pharmacy section also features a collection of books, including pharmacopoeias, medicine tariffs, pharmaceutical textbooks and handbooks, as well as a selection of pharmaceutical documents.

The tablet manufacture section displays tablet machines and other apparatus used for tablet production in Danish pharmacies and pharmaceutical companies. This section illustrates the development of tablet manufacture from craft to industry.

The medicine exhibition displays a selection of medicines from Danish pharmacies as well as pharmaceuticals from Danish and foreign industrial companies to illustrate the development of drugs from low- to high-technological products.

For further information about the Danish Collection of the History of Pharmacy including 600 photos, please see: [www.dfhf.dk](http://www.dfhf.dk)

**Text box**

The partners of the Danish Foundation of the History of Pharmacy:

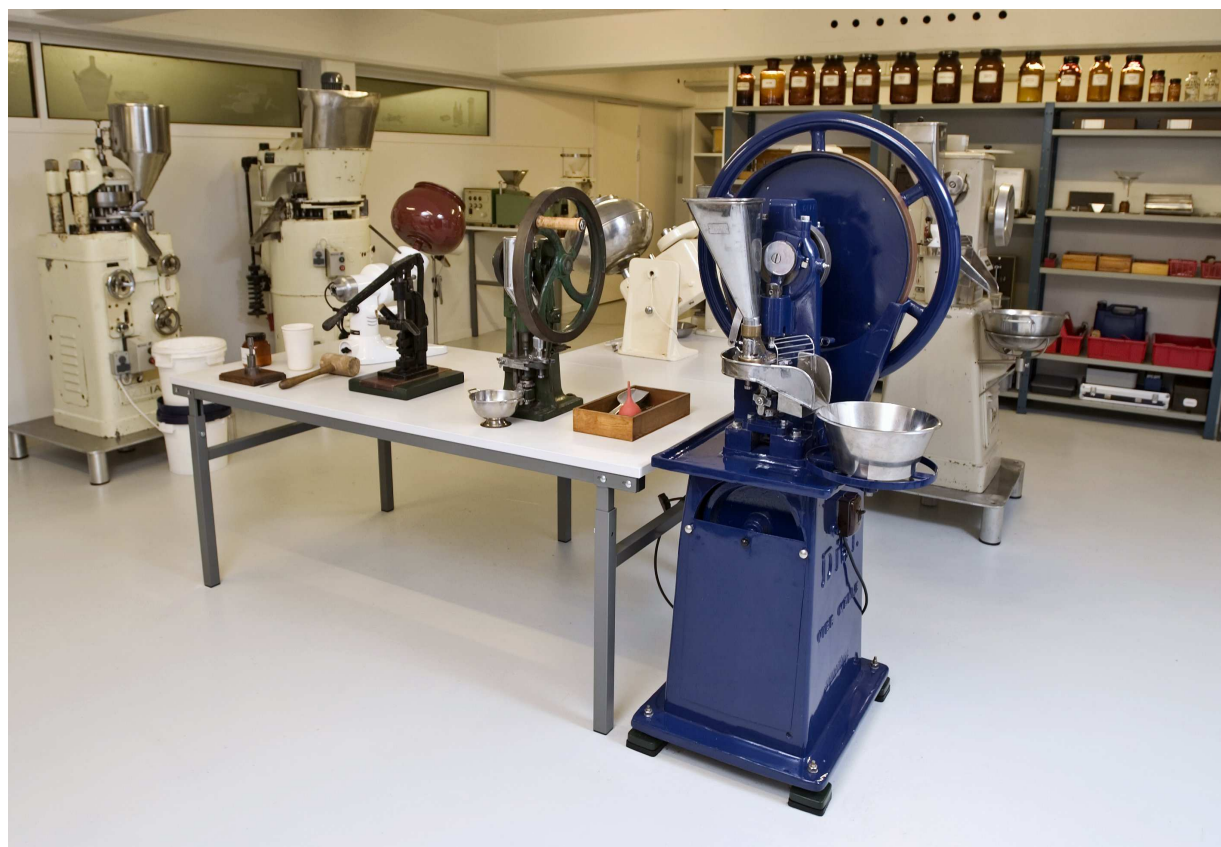
- The Danish Pharmaceutical Association
- Pharmadanmark (previously the Association of Danish Pharmacists)
- The Danish Association of Pharmaconomists
- The Danish Association of the Pharmaceutical Industry (Lif)
- The Association of Pharmaceutical Wholesalers (Megros)
- The Danish Society for the History of Pharmacy
- The Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of Copenhagen
- Pharmakon
- The Danish Medicines Agency
- The Ministry of the Interior and Health





*Fig. 2. Copper stills and other antique items from Danish pharmacies.*





*Fig. 3. Middle: Manual and mechanized tablet machines for use in pharmacies.*



*Fig. 4. Tablet machines for industrial production.*